

Unlawful Substance for Medical Treatment?

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Ibn Taymiyyah explains the impermissibility of seeking treatment through that which is unlawful (*haram*), and clarifies that the analogy between the permissibility of eating the unlawful out of necessity and the medicinal treatment through the unlawful substance is incorrect.

The reason is that eating guarantees removal of hunger (that is its very nature and it customarily and necessarily leads to that result) whereas medicinal treatments do not customarily and necessarily lead to cures, since cure from disease is not by any one specific treatment or way.

In *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, Ibn Taymiyyah was asked concerning the one who seeks medicinal treatment with intoxicant and swine's flesh and other than them from the unlawful things, "Is it permitted for necessity (*ad-darurah*) or not? And is this verse, 'And He has made clear to you what is unlawful for you, except that which you are compelled towards', regarding the permissibility of what has been mentioned (the unlawful substances) or not?"

He replied and explained that medicinal treatment by that is not permissible, rather it has been established in the *Sahih*, from the Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessing be upon him, said that he was asked about medicinal treatment with intoxicants and he said, "They are a disease."

In the *Sunan*, he prohibited medicinal treatment that which is filthy (*al-khabith*). He said, "Indeed Allah



did not place the healing of my *Ummah* in that in which He made unlawful for them."

Those who permitted medicinal treatment with unlawful substances analogised that with the permissibility of unlawful things such as (the consumption of) the dead animal and blood for the one compelled (by hunger). This position is weak due to a number of angles.

First, the one compelled by hunger will achieve his aim with certainty by consuming the unlawful things. When he eats them they will alleviate his hunger (keep him subsisting) and will end his necessity. As for the filthy things (*al-khaba'ith*), the cure by them cannot be held with certainty.

Second, the one compelled by necessity of hunger does not have any other way to end his necessity except by eating of these specific things. As for medicinal treatment, the taking of this filthy thing (*khabith*,

intoxicant, or unlawful meat etc.) is not particularised as a means for his cure. Medicinal treatments have many different types and cure can be achieved by other than medicinal treatments. Supplication (*ad-du'a*) and incantation (*ar-ruqyah*) are the greater types of medicinal treatment as well. Hippocrates remarked, "The ascription of our medicine to the medicine of the owners of temples (the religious) is like the ascription of the medicine of the infertile old women to our medicine."

Cure (*asy-syifa'*) can be acquired without a specific chosen course (of action), rather, on account of what Allah puts into the body of innate (healing) potentials and what is similar to that.

Third, eating the meat of dead animal for the one who is compelled (by necessity) is obligatory upon him in what is the apparent *mazhab* of the scholars and other than them, as

has been said by Masruq, "Whoever is compelled (by necessity) to eat the (meat of) the dead animal, and did not eat until he died, will enter the Fire."

As for medicinal treatment, then it is not obligatory to consume the unlawful substance in order to cure the disease, except in the view of a small faction of ulama.

The *Ulama* have different views regarding which of the two is more superior, medicinal treatment, or having patience, on account of the *hadith* of Ibn 'Abbas about the slave-girl who used to have epileptic seizures.

The slave-girl asked the Prophet to supplicate for her. So he said, "If you like, you can have patience and Paradise is yours, and if you like, I can supplicate to Allah to cure you." So she said, "I will have patience, but (in the course of my ailment) my (body) becomes exposed, so call upon Allah

that I do not become exposed."

So the Prophet of Allah made supplication for her that she not become exposed.

Among the Companions and Successors did not use to take medicinal treatments, rather, chose illness such as Ubay bin Ka'b and Abu Zar. No one showed rejection against them for abandoning medicinal treatment. When eating the flesh of the dead animal is obligatory in the case of hunger yet medicinal treatment is not obligatory, it is not permissible to make analogy between one and the other.

Ibn Uthaymin states in *Syarh Arba'in An-Nawawiyyah*, "Eating (the meat of) the dead animal when hungry, when nothing else can be found, is something by which the necessity is repelled (removed)."

As for medicinal treatment with what is unlawful (*muharram*), then it cannot be a *dhuroorah* (necessity) for two reasons. **Firstly**, that the ill person can be relieved (of his illness) without medicinal treatment, and thus there is no necessity. **Secondly**, that a person may take medicinal treatment through the unlawful, and not be relieved of his illness and thus his necessity is not repelled by way of it.

For this reason, the saying of the common people that "it is permissible to take medicinal treatment through the unlawful due to necessity", is a saying that has no authenticity to it, and the *Ulama* – may Allah give Mercy unto them – have textually stated that medicinal treatment through the unlawful is unlawful.

Healthy Muslim

Which pair is yours?



Non-smoker's lungs



Smoker's lungs